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Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

Topics for future in-depth evaluations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit the attached report of 3 February 1997 prepared by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in line with the provisions of regulation 7.2 and rule 107.2 (c) (i) and (iii) of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation. It contains background information and recommendations regarding future topics for in-depth evaluations. The Secretary-General concurs with these recommendations.

* E/AC.51/1997/1.

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ANNEX

Report by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on topics for future in-depth evaluations

I. BACKGROUND

1. Regulation 7.2 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, stipulates that an evaluation programme as well as a timetable for intergovernmental review of evaluation studies shall be proposed by the Secretary-General and approved by the General Assembly. Rule 107.2 (c) (i) provides that the evaluation proposals submitted by the Secretary-General to the General Assembly for its approval shall include a list of programmes or portions of programmes to be covered on a regular, periodic basis by in-depth evaluations and a timetable indicating the years in which the related reports are due. Rule 107.2 (c) (iii) also provides that at least one in-depth evaluation shall be undertaken each year.

II. IN-DEPTH EVALUATION: COMPRESSED CYCLE

2. It will be recalled that, at its thirty-fourth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination had before it a report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the role of evaluation findings in programme design, delivery and policy directives, in which a drastic shortening of the evaluation cycle from three years to one year was recommended (A/49/99, para. 43). In 1994, the Central Evaluation Unit conducted, under the shortened cycle, an in-depth evaluation of the environment programme. Two more in-depth evaluations have also been conducted under the shortened cycle, namely, the in-depth evaluation of peacekeeping operations: termination phase (E/AC.51/1996/3 and Corr.1) and the in-depth evaluation of the Department of Public Information (E/AC.51/1996/2). At its thirty-sixth session, the Committee noted that the compressed cycle of the in-depth evaluation had increased evaluation coverage without sacrificing quality (A/51/16 (Part I), para. 54).

III. IN-DEPTH EVALUATIONS UNDERTAKEN AND IN PROGRESS

3. The table below lists the in-depth evaluations undertaken from 1992 to 1997 and those scheduled for 1998-2000.

Table. In-depth evaluation reports completed or scheduled, 1992-2000

	Progress reports[a]	In-depth evaluation reports	Triennial reviews/follow-up reports	Reports to the General Assembly on evaluation
1992	Social development		Human rights	A/47/116
1993	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East[b]	UNHCR	Human settlements Human rights (follow-up)	
1994	Peacekeeping: start-up phase[c] Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development[c d]	Social development	Economic Commission for Africa: development issues and policies	A/49/99 and Add.1
1995		Peacekeeping: start-up phase Environment		
1996		Department of Public Information Peacekeeping: termination phase	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	A/51/88
1997		Statistics Department of Humanitarian Affairs	Social development	
1998		Crime prevention and criminal justice	Peacekeeping: start-up phase	(Report due)

	Progress reports[a]	In-depth evaluation reports	Triennial reviews/follow-up reports	Reports to the General Assembly on evaluation
		International drug control	Environment	
1999		Two topics to be decided in 1997	Department of Public Information Peacekeeping: termination phase	
2000		Two topics to be decided	Statistics Department of Humanitarian Affairs	(Report due)

[a] As decided by the Committee for Programme and Coordination in 1994, the evaluation cycle was shortened by the elimination of the progress report stage.

[b] As decided by the Committee for Programme and Coordination, no in-depth evaluation of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East was required.

[c] This was a transitional report that was described as a "progress report", but which contained substantive recommendations.

[d] A follow-up study was conducted by the Joint Inspection Unit (A/50/885, annex).

4. Several considerations are pertinent in determining topics for in-depth evaluations to be presented to the Committee in 1999 and 2000:

(a) The need to examine a programme generally considered successful in order to learn lessons applicable to related programmes;

(b) Significant recent expansion of the programme or changes in the problems addressed by it;

(c) The need to cover substantive programmes not yet subject to in-depth evaluation.

5. The Committee may wish to keep the foregoing considerations in mind in selecting two topics for in-depth evaluation in 1999 and two in 2000, and that the following programmes and subprogrammes have not been subject to or scheduled for in-depth evaluations or inspection reviews by the Office of Internal Oversight Services in the period 1992-1997:

Programme 1. Political affairs

Subprogrammes:

1.1 Prevention, control and resolution of conflicts

1.2 Assistance and support to the Secretary-General in the political aspects of his relations with Member States

1.3 Electoral assistance

1.4 Security Council affairs

1.5 General Assembly affairs

1.7 Question of Palestine

Programme 3. Peaceful uses of outer space

Subprogramme:

3.1 Outer space affairs

Programme 4. Legal affairs

Subprogrammes:

4.1 Overall direction, management and coordination of legal advice and services to the United Nations as a whole

4.2 General legal services to United Nations organs and programmes

4.3 Progressive development and codification of international law

4.4 Law of the sea and ocean affairs

4.5 Progressive harmonization and unification of the law of international trade

4.6 Custody, registration and publication of treaties

Programme 5. Policy coordination and sustainable development

Subprogrammes:

5.1 Policy coordination and inter-agency cooperation

5.2 Advancement of women

[5.3 Social development][a]

5.4 Sustainable development

Programme 7. Economic and social information and policy analysis

Subprogrammes:

[7.1 Statistics][a]

7.2 Population

7.3 Global development trends, issues and policies

7.4 Global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies

Programme 8. Development support and management services

Subprogrammes:

8.1 Public administration, finance and development

[8.2 Environment and social development management][a]

Programme 26. Disarmament[b]

6. At its thirty-sixth session, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the following programmes be the subject of in-depth evaluations, with reports to be presented to the Committee at its thirty-eighth session, in 1998 (A/51/16 (Part I), para. 55):

1998 Crime prevention and criminal justice

International drug control

An inspection by the Office of Internal Oversight Services combined with a management audit of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division will be conducted in 1997. The Committee for Programme and Coordination may wish to consider replacing the evaluation of the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme with that of another programme. Since any new evaluation for review by the Committee in 1998 would have to be conducted at very short notice it should be of a programme that is relatively compact, such as disarmament or electoral assistance.

7. Based upon the above-mentioned considerations, the following schedule is submitted to the Committee for Programme and Coordination for its consideration:

1998 Disarmament

International drug control

1999 Legal affairs

Electoral assistance

2000 Global development trends, issues and policies, and global approaches to social and microeconomic issues and policies, and the corresponding subprogrammes in the regional commissions

Advancement of women

Notes

[a] This component has been the subject of an in-depth evaluation.

[b] In-depth evaluation conducted in 1991 following two progress reports, one in 1989 and the other in 1990.